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IN THE  
**Supreme Court of the United States**  
October Term, 1942.

No. 1061 78

FINCK CIGAR CO., INC., PETITIONER,  
versus  
COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL REVENUE,  
RESPONDENT.

**Petition for a Writ of Certiorari**  
to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals,  
for the Fifth Circuit.

BIRKHEAD, DECKMANN, STANARD & VANCE,  
Majestic Building,  
San Antonio, Texas.

*Attorneys for Petitioner.*



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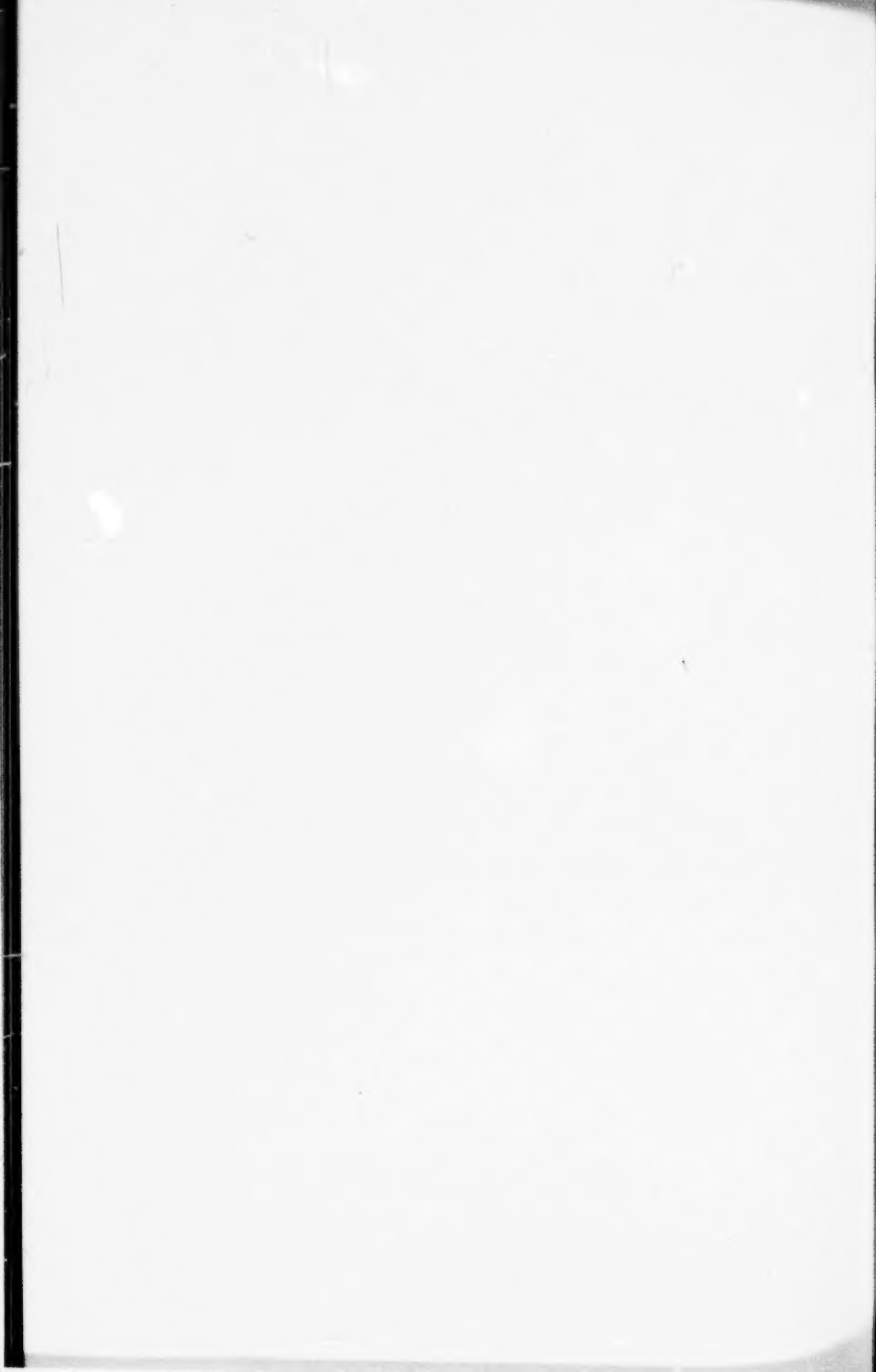
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**Petition for a Writ of Certiorari**

to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals,  
for the Fifth Circuit.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Finck Cigar Co., Inc., prays that a writ of certiorari  
issue to review the judgment of the United States Circuit  
Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit entered in the above-  
entitled cause on March 5, 1943.

**OPINIONS BELOW.**

The memorandum opinion of the Processing Tax Board  
of Review (R. 19-22) is unreported. The opinion of the  
Circuit Court of Appeals (R. 95-99) is reported in 134 F.  
(2d) 261.

## JURISDICTION.

The judgment of the Circuit Court of Appeals was entered on March 5, 1943. (R. 100). The jurisdiction of this Court is invoked under Section 240(a) of the Judicial Code, as amended by the Act of February 13, 1925.

## QUESTION PRESENTED.

Whether Processing Tax Board of Review's findings of fact with respect to increased costs of labor and material rebutted its findings of fact with respect to margins.

## STATUTES INVOLVED.

The statutes involved are set forth in the Appendix, *infra*, p. 4.

## STATEMENT.

The facts, as found by the Processing Tax Board of Review (R. 19-21), may be summarized as follows:

During the period from October 1, 1933, to May, 1935, petitioner was a processor engaged in processing tobacco into cigars, and paid processing taxes of \$20,126.25. (R. 19).

During the tax period petitioner manufactured eight or ten brands of cigars, and during said period the selling prices of all brands except two remained the same. The selling prices of two brands were raised \$1.50 per thousand because of the increased costs of labor and material, and to meet the current prices of popular brands. (R. 20).

The margin for the period before and after the tax was \$1.7612 per pound of tobacco, and the margin for the tax period was \$1.7973 per pound. (R. 21).

## SPECIFICATION OF ERRORS TO BE URGED.

The Circuit Court of Appeals erred:

1. In holding that the Board's fact findings with respect to margins were not rebutted by its fact findings with respect to increased labor and material costs.
2. In failing to reverse the decision of the Processing Tax Board of Review or, in the alternative, in failing to remand the cause for more specific findings with respect to costs.

## REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT.

In affirming the Board's decision, the Circuit Court of Appeals held, in effect, that the Board's findings with respect to margins were not rebutted by its findings with respect to increased costs of labor and material, neither of which was reflected in the margin computations (a large quantity of material was on hand when the tax went into effect). The decision below is thus directly in conflict with *Cones & Son Mfg. Co., vs. Commissioner*, 123 F. (2d) 530 (C. C. A. 7th), where it was held that where the increased price of certain cotton goods sold by the taxpayer was due to the increased cost of labor and the increased replacement cost of materials, and not to the tax itself, taxpayer sustained the burden of proof that it did not pass on the tax.

## CONCLUSION.

Wherefore it is respectfully submitted that this petition should be granted.

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BIRKHEAD, BECKMANN, STANARD & VANCE,  
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*Attorneys for Petitioner.*

APPENDIX.

REVENUE ACT OF 1936:

“Section 902. *Conditions on Allowance of Refunds.*

No refund shall be made or allowed, in pursuance of court decisions or otherwise, of any amount paid by or collected from any claimant as tax under the Agricultural Adjustment Act, unless the claimant established to the satisfaction of the Commissioner in accordance with regulations prescribed by him, with the approval of the Secretary, or to the satisfaction of the trial court, or the Board of Review in cases provided for under this section 906, as the case may be—

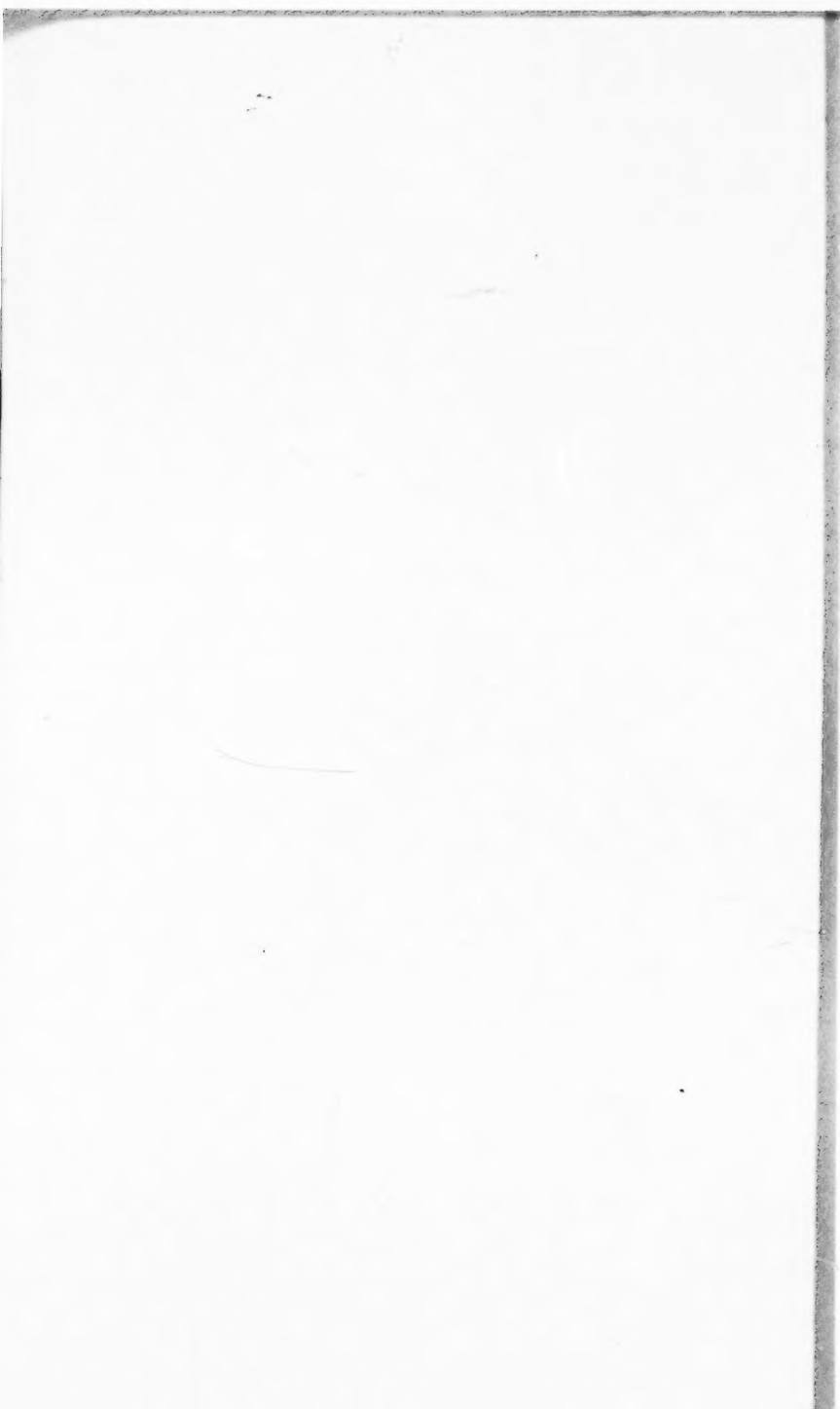
(a) That he bore the burden of such amount and has not been relieved thereof or reimbursed therefor nor shifted such burden, directly or indirectly, \* \* \*.”

“Section 907. *Evidence and Presumptions.*

(a) Where the refund claimed is for an amount paid or collected as processing tax, as defined herein, it shall be prima-facie evidence that the burden of such amount was borne by the claimant to the extent (not to exceed the amount of the tax) that the average margin per unit of the commodity processed was lower during the tax period than the average margin was during the period before and after the tax. If the average margin during the tax period was not lower, it shall be prima facie evidence that none of the burden of such amount was borne by the claimant but that it was shifted to others.

\* \* \*

(e) Either the claimant or the Commissioner may rebut the presumption established by subsection (a) of this section by proof of the actual extent to which the claimant shifted to others the burden of the processing tax. \* \* \*.”





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(1)



# In the Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, 1943

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No. 78

FINCK CIGAR CO., INC., PETITIONER

*v.*

GUY T. HELVERING, COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL  
REVENUE

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*ON PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED  
STATES CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIFTH  
CIRCUIT*

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## BRIEF FOR THE RESPONDENT IN OPPOSITION

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### OPINIONS BELOW

The opinion of the Circuit Court of Appeals (R. 94-97) is reported at 134 F. 2d 261. The findings of fact and decision of the United States Processing Tax Board of Review (R. 19-22) are not reported.

### JURISDICTION

The judgment of the Circuit Court of Appeals was entered March 5, 1943 (R. 97). The petition for a writ of certiorari was filed June 1, 1943.

The jurisdiction of this Court is invoked under Section 240 (a) of the Judicial Code, as amended by the Act of February 13, 1925.

**QUESTION PRESENTED**

Whether the taxpayer proved that it bore the burden of processing taxes paid under the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

**STATUTE INVOLVED**

Revenue Act of 1936, c. 690, 49 Stat. 1648:

**SEC. 902. CONDITIONS ON ALLOWANCE OF REFUNDS.**

No refund shall be made or allowed, in pursuance of court decisions or otherwise, of any amount paid by or collected from any claimant as tax under the Agricultural Adjustment Act, unless the claimant establishes to the satisfaction of the Commissioner in accordance with regulations prescribed by him, with the approval of the Secretary, or to the satisfaction of the trial court, or the Board of Review in cases provided under section 906, as the case may be—

(a) That he bore the burden of such amount and has not been relieved thereof nor reimbursed therefor nor shifted such burden, directly or indirectly, (1) through inclusion of such amount by the claimant, or by any person directly or indirectly under his control, or having control over him, or subject to the same common control, in

the price of any article with respect to which a tax was imposed under the provisions of such Act, or in the price of any article processed from any commodity with respect to which a tax was imposed under such Act, or in any charge or fee for services or processing; (2) through reduction of the price paid for any such commodity; or (3) in any manner whatsoever; and that no understanding or agreement, written or oral, exists whereby he may be relieved of the burden of such amount, be reimbursed therefor, or may shift the burden thereof; or

(b) That he has repaid unconditionally such amount to his vendee (1) who bore the burden thereof, (2) who has not been relieved thereof nor reimbursed therefor, nor shifted such burden, directly or indirectly, and (3) who is not entitled to receive any reimbursement therefor from any other source, or to be relieved of such burden in any manner whatsoever. (U. S. C., Title 7, Sec. 644.)

#### SEC. 907. EVIDENCE AND PRESUMPTIONS.

(a) Where the refund claimed is for an amount paid or collected as processing tax, as defined herein, it shall be prima-facie evidence that the burden of such amount was borne by the claimant to the extent (not to exceed the amount of the tax) that the average margin per unit of the commodity processed was lower during the tax period than the average margin was during the period before and after the tax. If the

average margin during the tax period was not lower, it shall be prima-facie evidence that none of the burden of such amount was borne by the claimant but that it was shifted to others.

\* \* \* \* \*

(U. S. C., Title 7, Sec. 649.)

#### STATEMENT

Taxpayer, a Texas corporation with its principal place of business at San Antonio, Texas, was engaged in the business of processing tobacco into cigars, and during the period from October 1, 1933, to May 1935, both inclusive, it paid processing taxes under the Agricultural Adjustment Act in the aggregate sum of \$20,126.25 upon the processing of such tobacco. Taxpayer duly filed a claim for refund of the full amount of processing taxes thus paid by it which was disallowed by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue. The taxpayer thereupon appealed to the United States Processing Tax Board of Review (since abolished by Section 510 of the Revenue Act of 1942) and the claim was tried before that Board on its merits. (R. 19-20.)

The Processing Tax Board of Review found that during the tax period the taxpayer manufactured eight or ten brands of cigars, and during that period the taxpayer's sales price remained the same as theretofore for all brands except two.

With respect to these two brands prices were increased from \$38.50 per thousand to \$40 per thousand. The sale of these two brands of cigars amounted to approximately 60 percent of the sales of all brands of cigars. The sales prices of the two brands were increased because of the increased cost of labor and the increased cost of material, and further to meet the current prices of popular brands. The taxpayer was still selling these two brands at the increased prices on June 18, 1941. (R. 20.)

The Board of Review further found that the taxpayer's statutory margin per unit of commodity processed for the period before and after the tax was \$1.7612 per pound and that its statutory margin per unit of commodity processed during the tax period was \$1.7973 per pound (R. 21). The Board also found as a fact that no part of the burden of the processing tax paid by the taxpayer under the Agricultural Adjustment Act was borne by it but that such burden was shifted to others in its entirety (R. 21).

#### ARGUMENT

This is a fact case. Section 902 of the Revenue Act of 1936 provides that no refund shall be made or allowed of any amount paid as tax under the Agricultural Adjustment Act, c. 25, 48 Stat. 31, unless the claimant proves that he bore the burden thereof. In aid of the proof of this fact, Section

907 (a) provides that if the average margin per unit of commodity processed was lower during the tax period than the average margin during the period before and after, it shall be *prima facie* evidence that the taxpayer bore the burden of the tax to that extent. On the other hand, if the average margin during the tax period was not lower, it shall be *prima facie* evidence that none of the burden of the tax was borne by the claimant. Other provisions of the section prescribe the method for computing such margins.

The Board of Review found that the taxpayer's margin per pound of tobacco processed during the tax period was higher than its margin per pound of tobacco processed during the period before and after the tax, thus creating a presumption that the tax burden was not borne by the taxpayer. The proof offered by the taxpayer to overcome the presumption created by the comparison of margins was inadequate to prove that the taxpayer bore the burden of any part of the amount sued for.

The decision of the Board of Review and the court below are based upon failure of proof. The only question involved is whether the finding that the taxpayer did not bear any part of the tax burden is sustained by the evidence. The taxpayer suggests (Pet. 3) that the Board's conclusion is contrary to "its findings with respect to

increased costs of labor and material." Even if this inference were justified, it would not constitute ground for granting certiorari. However, there is no merit to the point. The Board did not make any direct finding with respect to increased costs, other than the processing tax. It merely found that the prices of two brands of cigars were increased "because of the increased cost of labor and the increased cost of material, and further to meet the current prices of popular brands" (R. 20). But the evidence, which consisted of estimates and approximations unsupported by any book records, was too indefinite to permit any finding with respect to the effect of any increase in costs of labor and material upon the taxpayer's margin for the tax period. This insufficiency in the proof is emphasized by the court below (R. 96-97).

The taxpayer bases its petition for a writ of certiorari on an alleged conflict (Pet. 3) with *C. B. Cones & Son. Mfg. Co. v. United States*, 123 F. 2d 530 (C. C. A. 7). But there is no conflict. The latter case, like the instant case, is a fact case, and the decision was based upon the evidence. Further, the *Cones* case involved an amount paid as floor-stocks tax under the Agricultural Adjustment Act, whereas the instant case involves a claim for refund of amounts paid as processing tax. Section 907 (a) of the 1936 Act is inapplicable to claims for refund of floor-stocks taxes.

**CONCLUSION**

The petition for a writ of certiorari should be denied.

Respectfully submitted.

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JULY 1943.

